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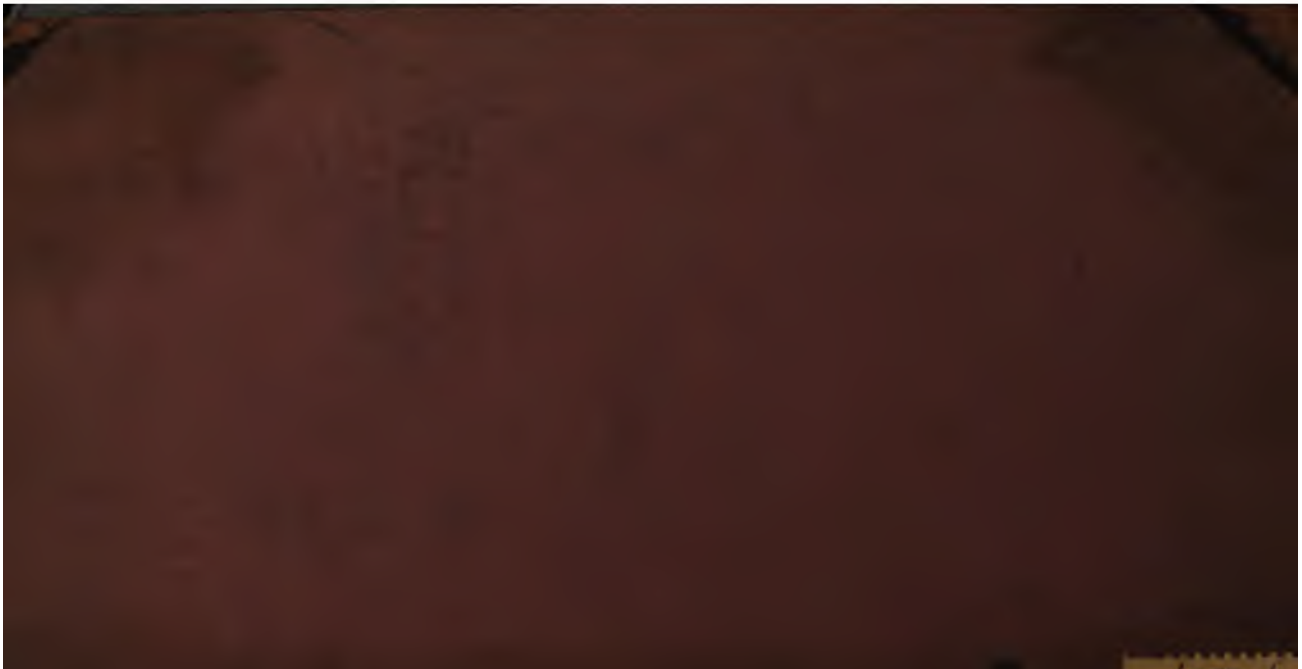

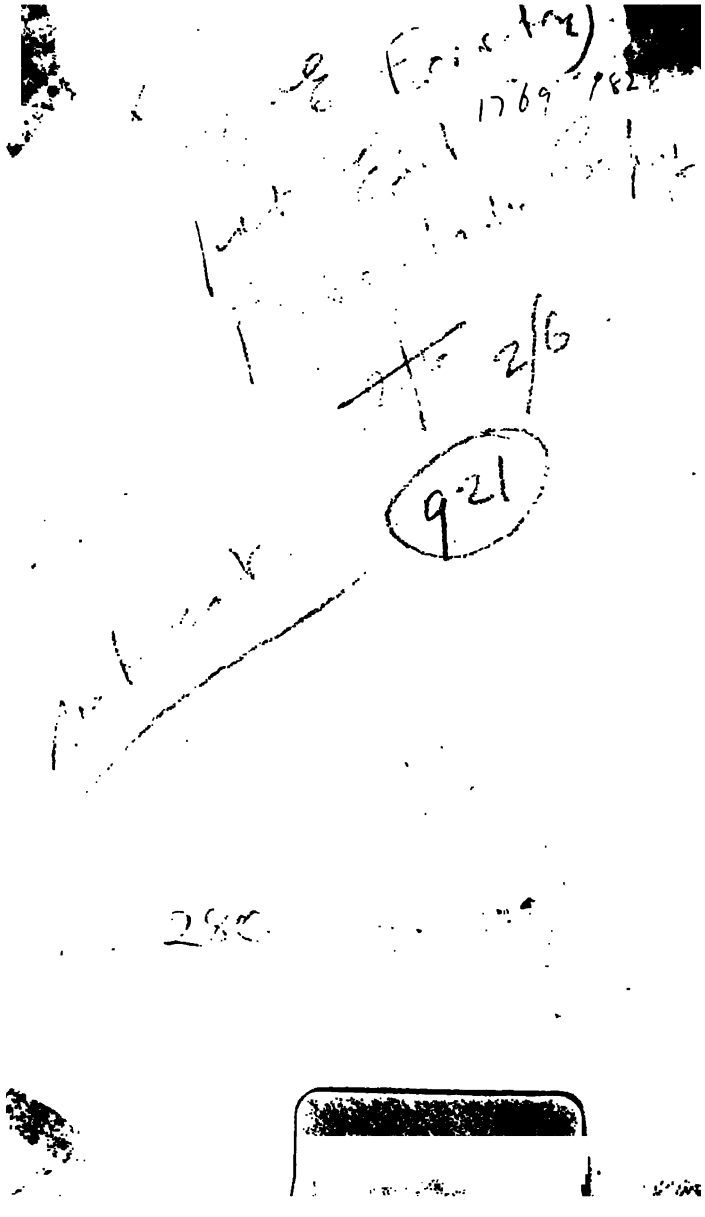

From the author

OCCASIONAL AMUSEMENTS.

LONDON:

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1946

TO EMILIA.

EMILIA, no, I cannot bid thee leave
Thy lofty bower, to seek my lowly cot,
Or wish of each soft luxury to bereave
Thy beauty, partner of my ruder lot.
On massy column rais'd thy arched roof,
And planted round with many a sheltering grove,
'Gainst rudest storms, and deadliest thunder proof,
And summer's heat; securely thou mayst rove.
Fast by thy grot, and thro' thy flowered vale,
Her fullest stream obedient Plenty pours;
Thine ear's still greeted with a grateful tale,
Security still guards thy peaceful doors.
To woo thee hence were little proof of love;
Cease then, my heart, a treacherous suit to move.

In lowly vale, beneath unequal sky,
My humble thatch the work of rudest hands,
Near one small shallow brook which babbleth by,
But ill defended from the tempest stands.
Should thunders roll, or should the rude wind rise,
Ruffling the vext clouds till they pour'd their rain,
Ah, what could save me from inclement skies,
Or what protect me from the deluged plain.
The tempest would the low thatcht cot assail,
The brook its narrow limits would o'erflow,
O'er the frail tenement the storm prevail,
And nought could save me from impending woe.
To woo the hither were small proof of love,
Cease then, fond heart, a treacherous suit to move.

Yet blest with thee, far lovelier should I deem
This my poor cottage, than the throne of Kings.
Far more delightful to my sense would seem
This humble life, than all which grandeur brings.
Oh !' wouldst thou listen to my ardent vow,
And deign to tread with me this secret grove,
Sure I would tell thee of such joys as thou
Wouldst own surpassing great the joys of love,

Enchanting

Enchanting power, whose lively ray dispels
Each threat'ning ill, and rugged woe disarms,
For holy peace, perpetual inmate, dwells
With virtuous love: Oh! that my song had charms
To woo thee listen to my tale of love,
And hear my tongue its fond petition move.

Should care intrude? and who is free from care?
Alas! his rude foot strikes the humble door;
In at the palace portal does he dare
Boldly to rush, his clamorous suit to pour.
Yet can mild Virtue's pity-pleading tongue
Smooth ev'n his brow, and cause him to relent;
And thou art virtuous, and thy gentle song
Can call from yonder sacred bower, Content.
Far in the grove, he, holy sage, retires;
Emilia, thou with some slow dittied air,
Such as thy genius oft at eve inspires,
Shalt charm him to our cottage to repair:
He once our guest, Care has no pow'r to move
The settled comforts of our lasting love.

Tho' low'ring clouds should dim the radiant skies,
And chill the fervour of effulgent noon,

Content secure on Heaven for aid relies,
Nor fears but Heaven will grant her modest boon:
While temperate Hope, intent on future views,
Sooths the calm soul, e'en in the darkest hour.
Points to that peace which evening shall diffuse
Thro' breaking clouds, when calmest sunbeams pour.
Emilia, yes, I now dare woo thee, leave
Thy lofty bower to seek my lowly cot,
There every tranquil gift shalt thou receive,
Content can shower upon our humble lot.
Ah! not in vain my fond suit let me move,
But yield, ah yield thee to my constant love.

In one plain tenor of the purest peace,
On steady wing our fleeting hours shall pass,
No absent pleasure shall disturb our ease,
Seen by false lights in folly's flattering glass.
But while at eve we sit before our door
Amid the freshness of the falling dew,
Together to the skies one prayer we pour,
And every morn shall the same prayer renew:
That since in constant unity we live,
One happy hour may raise us to the sky;

That

That thou no mournful widow mayst survive,
Nor I behold thy urn with weeping eye *.
This our unfeigned suit alone will move,
Nor dream of earthly joys beyond our love.

By Dr. JORTIN.

Qualis per nemorum nigra silentia,
Vallesque irriguas, et virides domos,
Serpit fons placidus murmure languido
Secretum peragens iter,
Flexas per patrios circumagens aquas
Paulum ludit agros, et simulat fugam,
Donec præcipiti jam pede defluens
Miscetur gremio maris:

* Quoniam concordes egimus annos,
Auferat hora duos eadem, nec conjugis unquam
Busta meæ videam, neu sum tumulandus ab illâ.
Ovid.

Talis

Talis per tacitam devia semitam
Ætas diffugiat, non opibus gravis
Non experta fori jurgia turbidi, aut
Palmæ sanguineum decus.
Cumque instant tenebræ, et lux brevis occidit,
Et ludo satura, et fessa laboribus
Somni frater iners membra jacentia
Componat gelida manu.

As thro' the shadowy silence of the groves,
The water'd vallies, and the green retreats,
The gentle brook with languid murmur roves,
Ere yet its secret journey it compleats.
Winding its devious current pausing plays
Thro' fields paternal still delights to creep,
Until with step precipitate it strays,
To plunge into the bosom of the deep.
Thro' silent paths so may my varying life
Pass gently on, to wealth no sordid slave,
Unknown the wrangling bar's tumultuous strife,
Unknown the blood-stain'd honours of the brave.

And

And when approaching evening's darkened gloom,
With pleasure sated or by toil oppress'd,
May sleep's calm brother in the silent tomb
With his cool hand, compose my limbs to rest.

JORTIN'S EPITAPH ON A CAT.

Fessa annis morboque gravi, mitissima Felis
Infernos tandem cogor abire lacus:
Et mihi subridens Proserpina dixit, Habeto
Elysios soles, Elysiumque nemus:
Sed bene si merui, facilis Regina silentum,
Da mihi saltem unâ nocte redire domum,
Nocte redire domum, dominoque hæc discere in aurem,
Te tua fida etiam trans Styga Felis amat.

Decessit Felis anno 1756; vixit annos 14, menses 11, dies 4.

IMITATED.

A victim to the gradual lapse of age
Tho' thy attentive hand was ever nigh
Each want to help and every pang assuage,
At length without an agony I die.

Believe

Believe that ev'n in death a wish remains,
Nor do I rest without a fond desire
To tell thee, gentle soother of my pains,
All which true love and gratitude inspire.
O let me as a dream at least appear,
" Revisiting the glimpses of the moon,"
And whisper grateful in my master's ear,
—This wish obtained I ask no farther boon.

INSCRIPTION.

The Thought from Moschus.

Still may the shadow of the broad-leav'd Plane
Aid the calm musing of my pensive mind;
Still may I listen on thy banks reclin'd,
Sweet Brook, whose gentle murmurs charm the swain.

INSCRIPTION, 1794.

HERE sleeps the young, tho' deck'd with every charm,
Tho' form'd each adverse mortal to disarm:
Disease, fell tyrant, with relentless rage
Seiz'd with his eager fang her tender age.
Long Nature struggled, long inventive Art
Strove to avert Death's meditated dart:
In vain they strove; the mandate from above
Tore the dear victim from a Husband's love.

INSCRIPTION FOR A COTTAGE.

UNWORSHIP'D by the vulgar throng, to Thee,
True votarist, this humble roof I raise,
Thine, heavenly Calmness! may this dwelling be.
While from thy cot, the cheerful eye surveys
Each temperate treasure bounteous Nature gives,
And marks observant how her stores increase,
Stores which an humble gratitude receives,
The riches of Simplicity and Peace.

INSCRIPTION, 1779.

ON A DOG.

Not indolently tame, or fiercely wild,
His mien was gentle and his temper mild,
Untaught to growl defiance at the poor,
He drove no humble beggar from the door.
From youth, ev'n to his life's remotest end,
His greatest pleasure to caress a friend.
Deem not amiss, if where his relics lay,
A sudden tear should fall on gentle Tray.

INSCRIPTION, 1761.

FOR A TOMB.

The hour when she was born or when she died
Let this unbreathing frail memorial tell,
Trifles revering Memory has denied
To store as treasures in her hallow'd cell.

But

But how belov'd she fill'd life's little space,
How gentle, yet correct her morals were;
Deep in her children's hearts full many a trace
Remains, and will remain for ever there.
There grav'd in living characters, too deep
For distant Time's wide-wasting hand to move,
Where sacred vigils Memory loves to keep,
Glow the strong records traced by filial love.

ODE;

The sentiments old fashioned.

[*Printed in the World,* 1756.]

I 'LL tell you why I love my love;
Because her thousand graces prove
Her worth is very high.
She's very fair, and very good,
And not unwilling to be woo'd
By one so plain as I.

Where

Wherever Muse has fir'd the strain
On British or on Tuscan plain,
  Delighted has she roved,
Has glow'd with all the generous rage
Which animates the storied page
  By British bosom loved.

Skilful she joins the tuneful choir,
With ready descant strikes the lyre,
  And breathes the floating song.
She in the wavy dance presides,
Commanding grace her motion guides,
  A goddess midst the throng.

Oft has she sought with careful feet
The hallow'd hermit's calm retreat,
  And trac'd with thought profound,
Each precept of the wise and good,
There every wish has she subdued,
  To Wisdom's narrow bound.

Has learn'd the flattering paths to shun,
Where Folly's fickle votaries run,

Deceiv'd

Deceiv'd by Fortune's glare,
Has learn'd that food, and cloaths, and fire,
Are all which nature can desire,
Nor forms for more her prayer.

Content with these, my Geraldine
Has promis'd to be ever mine,
For well she knows my heart.
She knows it open and sincere,
And much too honest to appear
Beneath the veil of art.

She knows it pants for her alone,
That not the splendour of a throne
From her my steps could lure.
To-morrow gives to my fond arms
My Geraldine in all her charms,
And makes my bliss secure.

ODE;

The Sentiments more modern.

No, no, by all the powers above
My heart's as little touch'd by love
As ever in my life,
Full well, dear Hal, to thee is known,
Whom Fortune to my lot has thrown
To be my wedded wife.

But why I wed should any ask,
To answer is an easy task,
Want, want, my honest Harry;
What can a man whose fortune 's spent
Who 's mortgaged to his utmost rent,
But drown, or shoot, or marry?

Of these, the best is sure the bride;
For when once plung'd beneath the tide,
Adieu to all our figure.
Full sudden is the pistol's fate,
When once 'tis touch'd, alas! too late
We wish undrawn the trigger.

'Tis

'Tis thus resolv'd then, honest boy,
To-morrow thou mayst wish me joy,
Joy will I buy by wiving.
Soon to her mansion far from town
Six rapid bays shall whirl us down,
As if the Devil were driving.

There shall the brisk capacious bowl
Drown every care which haunts the soul,
And rouse me to new life.
And, Hal, for all that she can say,
Some blooming village Queen of May
Shall wait upon my wife.

When all the tedious farce is o'er,
And spouse has crown'd me with her dower,
Should sudden ruin meet her,
E'en though her coachman broke her neck,
Unmov'd I 'd stand amid the wreck,
Nor swear at heedless Peter.

FRAG-

FRAGMENT,

Intended as an Introduction to a Canto entituled The Vale of Hymen, in Imitation of Spencer.

All as a stripling youth who new to arms,
What time the sword and buckler are displayed,
Feels his brave bosom beat to war's alarms,
And pants full eager to be well arrayed,
Nathless with unproved armour is afraid,
To seek fell danger in an unknown plain.
With wav'ring breast, ne dauntless, ne dismayed,
He puts it on, he puts it off again.
Last issues forth, for naught his prowess can restrain.

Or as of Dian's train some maid full meek
And bashful, when Dan Phœbus rideth high,
At noon with timid step the grove doth seek,
To shade from fervour of the summer sky,
And bathe her in some brook most privily,
She feareth to unwreath her flowing hair,
She looketh back lest any her descry,
Ne will expose to sight her bosom fair,
And scarce will she alone her secret beauties bare.

So

So I, the meanest follower of the muse,
Fearful t' assume the golden stringed lyre,
Lest Phœbus should implored aid refuse,
Ardent to join, yet trembling join the choir.
For ah! no spirit will my bosom fire
With glowing song, ne from the sacred tree
To deck my longing brow dare I aspire.
The laurel wreathe, guerdon too fair for me,
Full well I ween, would fade if I so bold should be.

Harmonious Sisters! but if ye would deign
Be frequent prompters to my simple song,
Then might I hope high honour to attain,
To ye does every power of verse belong,
Each lay soft flowing and each cadence strong;
Would ye but smile, new warmth would be imprest
Ev'n to my soul, and the full choir among,
Bold should I strike the lyre above the rest,
New vigour guide my hand, new spirit fire my breast.

In fitting song then might I hope display
Hymen's fair vale, fairer than that of old,
Luxuriant Tempe, blest with mildest ray,
And, nothing fearful, would I dare unfold,

What

What but in Sacred song may not be told.
The bliss exalted which aye reigneth there,
Where wreathed flowers in sweetest union hold,
The social breast of every happy pair,
Joined by ardent vows their mutual joys to share.

THE VICAR'S WIFE.

——*Femina conjuge justo*
Digna. OVID.

WHERE the slow winding stream divides the mead,
Whose fertile pastures numerous heifers feed,
Beneath the shelter of a shadowy wood,
On a small rising ground a temple stood,
Whose time-worn tower the mantling ivy bound,
Where many an antient tomb was mouldering round.
Thither to pour to Heaven the pious prayer,
Or grateful tribute for a plenteous year,
The village fathers from each straw-roof'd home,
With heart sincere and holy reverence come.

Among

Among the throng with steady solemn pace
An aged matron slow approach'd the place,
White was her 'kerchief as the garden's pride,
And sober gray her decent mantle dyed,
While on she moved, I saw the children haste
To hold the church-way wicket as she pass'd,
Where she would smiling ask them of their sire,
Or grand-dame's welfare with a kind desire.
If she their age from sickness could relieve,
The choicest herbs of all her stores to give.
Each natural sickness to her art would yield,
Who cull'd her natural medicine from the field.
For she was knowing in each healing power
Which lies conceal'd in every plant or flower,
What cool'd the burning fever's rage could tell,
But chas'd the shivering ague by a spell.
She was the Vicar's wife, a goodly dame,
Who in the village bore no little fame.
Nor wonder, for to all she would extend
Her bounty, as tho' nature's general friend.
Chearful she rose to practice in the morn
The virtues which domestic life adorn,
Her well-known voice which summoned to their food
Recall'd each vagrant straggling from the brood.

When

When they were fed, she with a housewife's care,
To different household duties would repair.
Then thro' the straggling hamlet would she go,
To pour her comfort on the house of woe.
Her portion little, little could she give,
But a small alms will real want relieve;
All which she had, she chearful would dispense,
And for the morrow trust to Providence.

Oft in the evening to her little hall
The village children pleas'd obey'd her call,
Nor feared her lesson, from her fond regard,
The foremost in his progress met reward.

But now the church bell ceas'd, each rustic ran
To take his sitting ere the prayers began;
No sound was heard until the good man spoke,
Whose solemn voice the sacred silence broke;
Attention on the pious audience hung,
Till penitence responsive loos'd the tongue,
Then, and to each alternate verse of praise
Did meek devotion humble accents raise.

Soon as the sacred services were done
Approaching clouds in darkness wrapt the sun,
The thunder roll'd, and on the drooping plain
The lightnings flash'd, and clouds discharg'd their rain.

When

When the good dame, of women sure the best,
Perceiv'd me stranger, and then hail'd me guest.
Her house scarce differing from the cottage form
Could give a shelter from the rising storm.
The threshold introduc'd the little hall,
Where many an uncouth painting deck'd the wall;
Chief o'er the rest the martyr'd Charles pourtrayed,
Patience and meekness on his brow displayed,
His earthly grandeur all was broken down,
And opening skies disclos'd an heavenly crown.
Nor elegance nor piety could save
The hapless monarch from the untimely grave.
This piece the unlettered hinds would often view,
But his whole story well the matron knew,
And when chill winter call'd them round her fire,
Pleas'd she recounted at their first desire,
For much delighted she the woes to tell
Which in her father's days this land befel;
And many a woeful story she 'd recal
From the black letter legend in the hall.
Which the good neighbours would attentive hear,
While down each cheek oft rolled the pitying tear,
And oft to Heaven broke forth the ready praise
That peace and plenty bless'd their happier days.

But

But soon the thunder ceas'd, nor more the rain
Or livid lightning vex'd the cheering plain,
The birds forsook the shelter of the grove,
And sang again their cheerful songs of love.
The vallies echoed with the heifer's low.
I now must onward move, but ere I go,
Good dame, farewell; for this thy friendly deed,
May Heaven reward thee at thy utmost need;
On thy calm age its choicest blessings shower;
May peace betide thee at thy parting hour;
And when the village shall thy loss bemoan,
May this plain verse inscribe thine humble stone:

"Here rests in pleasing hope of that great day
When Christ 'Well done, my faithful lamb,' shall say.
One who when living, all who knew her loved,
And dying were with grief sincerely moved.
Oh! Passenger, enquire of them her life,
And wish each vicar such a holy wife."

TO S. D. F.

With Moore's Fables.

Go, by parental fondness sent,
Go, little book, thyself present,
And tell her whose untutor'd age
Seeks the instruction of thy page,
In Wisdom's search they need not roam,
Whose mothers act like hers at home.
A Pye, the pertest of her race,
With teacher's band bedeck'd her face,
Aloft the female pedant stood,
Harangued her sisters of the wood,
Told them how vain the boast of Fame,
That titles were an empty name,
That what the world esteem'd was idle,
That youth should roving fancy bridle,
Bewail'd the fading glow of beauty,
And babbled of domestic duty.
Ran every topic o'er and o'er,
And hackneyed all the moral lore
Which has been said in prose or rhyme
From Adam to the present time.

A Chicken

A Chicken from the neighbouring glade
By chance in search of food had strayed,
And vex'd at the declaiming sage,'
Thus animated, spoke her rage:
" Why raise round virtue such a smother!
I see it in the Hen my mother.
Leave, pedant fool, the pride of teaching,
She *practises* while thou art *preaching*."

GRAY'S—*O Tu severi Religio loci!*

PARODIED IN A LITTERED STUDY.

Hail, Genius of this littered study!
Or tell what name you most delight in;
For sure where all the ink is muddy,
And no clean margin left to write in
No common deity resides.
We see, we feel thy power divine,
In every tattered folio's dust,

In

Each mangled manuscript is thine,
And thine the antique helmet's rust,
Nor less observ'd thy power presides
Where plundered brasses crowd the floor,
Or dogs-ear'd drawings burst their binding
Hid by Confusion's puzzling door
Beyond the reach of mortal finding.
Than if beneath a costly roof
Each moulding edged by golden fillet,
The Russian binding, insect-proof,
Blushed at the foppery of ———
Give me, when tir'd by dust and sun,
If rightly I thy name invoke,
The bustle of the Town to shun,
And breathe unvext by city smoke.
But, ah! if from these cobweb'd walls
And from this moth-embroidered cushion
Too fretful Fortune rudely calls,
Resolv'd the cares of life to push on—
Give me at least to pass my age
At ease in some book-tapestried cell,
Where I may turn the pictured page,
Nor start at visitants' loud bell.

ODE.

If e'er, repining at my fate,
I form one wish to join the great;
Or, thankless for my little store,
Press Heaven with prayers to grant me more;
May every prayer want power to move,
And every wish unheeded prove!
  But if in unambitious phrase
One only sigh to Heaven I raise,
Let not my prayer return in vain,
But hear, ye Powers, the votive strain;
In this alone propitious prove,
Oh! grant me my Emilia's love.
Without her, when I lonely stray,
Each flowery field's a weary way,
The stream which through the meadow flows
Murmurs dull echo to my woes.
  Where their thick boughs the old oaks spread,
Seems but to me a dreary shade,
The gentle gurgling of the dove
Is insult to my hopeless love.
Only thy voice I stop to hear,
Sweet bird! thrill plaintive to my ear,

When,

When, nightly pouring forth thy moan,
Thou sing'st, poor bird, like me, alone.
  But if with me my love would deign
To tread at eve the peaceful plain,
How chang'd would every grove appear,
Each flower a lively bloom would bear;
The babbling stream would sweetly glide,
If she were walking by its side;
The thickest woods of antient oak
Would echo raptures if she spoke;
The tender warble of the dove
Her sweeter love-tale would improve;
And thou, poor plaintive bird of woe,
Oft as thy raptur'd song did flow,
Sweet solace of our bliss would be,
When we were joined, to pity thee,
Remembring that thy cruel state
Was once our own unhappy fate.
  Let not my prayer return in vain,
But hear, ye Powers, my votive strain.
This only blessing I desire,
I glow with no unhallowed fire,
But Heaven and Nature join to own
Man was not born to be alone.

ODE.

See Horace, Book III. Ode 16.

THE maid whom walls of stone immure,
From fortune-hunters sleeps secure,
Yet the rich lover dares attack,
Nor fears lest he be driven back;
For not ev'n walls of stone withstand
Who brings a settlement in hand.
What cannot powerful money do?
The watchful guard it rushes through.
French gold dispersed among the states
Has forced the strongest Belgic gates.
Yet, tho' perpetual stores increase,
A care for more still breaks our peace;
Taught by Sir John*, too great for power,
I dread an envied height to soar;
While he in humbler life delights,
The ornament of City Knights.
From Heaven true bliss is ever sent
To dwell with those who live content.

* Sir John Barnard.

Far

Far from the rich man's state I 'd fly
For refuge, ev'n to poverty;
A matter of a fairer prize,
Tho' haughty wealth my lot despise,
Than if the extended acre's corn
From my abundant fields was borne,
Which crowds th' inhospitable door
Of Parcus, 'mid his riches poor.
If Ceres shower'd with bounteous hand
Her blessings on my little land,
While sturdy oaks, their country's pride,
Fenc'd with bold branches every side,
Parcus might envying see my bliss,
Tho' all Jamaica's wealth were his.
What tho' no pine my ground afford,
Nor Indian turtles load my board:
What tho' no Gallic wine-press drain
For my beauffet the brisk Champagne,
Yet, thank kind Heaven, far, far from me
Skulks eager houseless Poverty.
Nor does my friendly fate refuse
Ev'n more than Nature wants for use.
While thus with bounded wish I live,
Fortune has nothing left to give,

A greater

A greater empire owns my sway
Than his whom Turkish realms obey.
They ever want who much require;
Sure it were wiser to desire
His lot, whom Heaven in pity grants,
Tho' little, every thing he wants.

TO CLOE, 1750.

INDEED, my Cloe, I detest
The bustle of a City feast;
Come then, and in my cottage sup,
Tho' no rich wine o'erflow our cup.
And not prolong'd beyond their time
By Luxury's unnatural crime,
The withering winter roses die,
Dull emblem of mortality!
Yet in each other amply blest,
Sublimer joy shall warm our breast,
For livelier than the purple rose
The vivid blush of Beauty glows,

And Love exalts the spirits more
Than flustering Bacchus' utmost power.
Love, sole intruder to our feast,
Shall be this night my cottage guest,
Shall deck me with gay myrtle wreath,
And prompt each ardent vow I breathe.
Thou, lovely ministress of joy,
Shall fond caress the playful boy,
While, heedless of his careless art
He strike thee with his golden dart.
Yet wilt thou not lament his guile,
But at the urchin's prowess smile,
Conscious his weak attempt is vain,
Nor dream of danger without pain.
Yet Cloe thou shalt quickly hear
With willing and more willing ear,
As thou art feebler from the wound,
My rising wishes bolder sound,
Till quite subdued thy arms thou yield,
Nor longer keep th' unequal field.
Then lovely Peace her bough shall rear,
And thou, reliev'd from every fear,
Shalt open all thy heart to love;
Then shall we mildest raptures prove,

Ever unknown amid the crowd,
Who, busy, prying, pert, and loud,
Each gentle transport still destroy,
And interrupt each rising joy.
Couldst thou before the censuring City
Be so fond, or look so pretty?
Thou couldst not, Cloe; nor could I
Gaze on thee with such fervent eye.
Yield then, my love, to my request,
And be this eve my cottage guest.
My board affords a better fare
Than all the luxury of the Mayor.
Beyond the search of vulgar eyes
Our bliss in sweet retirement lies,
Where no rude blast may e'er annoy
The tender texture of our joy;
Of frame too delicately fine
With the rough crowd's excess to join.

SONG

SONG, 1770.

Occasional to H. B. C.

CAN a lover hope to please her
Who approaches her on foot?
Tales of love will only teaze her
From an unembroider'd suit.

Shepherds' pipes and rustic measures
Never move a courtly heart,
Diamonds and substantial treasures
Form the point of Cupid's dart.

Prancing steeds and rattling coaches,
Liveried lackeys gaily drest—
Mark! the happy man approaches
By consenting Cloe blest.

THE DOWAGER.

Printed in Dodsley's Miscellanies.

WHERE aged elms in many a goodly row
Give yearly shelter to the constant crow,
A mansion stands.—Long since the pile was rais'd,
Whose Gothic grandeur the rude hind amaz'd;
For the rich ornament on every part
Confess'd the founder's wealth and workman's art:
Tho' as the range of the wide court we tread,
The broken arch now totters o'er the head;
And where of old rose high the social smoke,
Now swallows build, and lonely ravens croak:
Tho' Time, whose touch each beauty can deface,
Has torn from every tower the sculptur'd grace,
Tho' round each stone the sluggard ivy crawls,
Yet antient state sits hovering on the walls.
Where wont the festal chorus to resound,
And jocund dancing frequent beat the ground,

Now

Now Silence spreads around her gloomy reign—
Save when the mastiff clanks his iron chain,
Save where his hoarse bark echoes dire alarm,
Fierce to protect the place from midnight harm,
Its only guard; no revel sounding late
Drives the night villain from the lonely gate.
An hallow'd matron, and her simple train,
These solemn battlements alone contain—
An hoary dowager, whose placid face
Old Age has decked with lovely awful grace,
With almost vernal bloom her cheek still strow'd,
As beauty ling'ring left her lov'd abode,
That lov'd abode, where join'd with truth and sense
She formed the features to mute eloquence,
And bade them charm the still attentive throng
Who watched the sacred lessons of her tongue.
For not thro' life the Dame had lived retir'd,
But once had shone even 'midst a Court admired.
What time the lov'd possessor of her charms,
Returning from the war in victor arms,
Call'd from his Monarch's tongue the plausive praise,
While honour wreath'd him with unfading bays,
She, happy partner of each joyful hour,
Then walk'd serene amid the pomp of power,

While

While all confess'd no warrior's wish could move
For fairer prize than such accomplish'd love;
Nor to that love could aught more transport yield
Than graceful valour from the victor field.
Thus flourished once the beauteous and the brave;
But mortal bliss still meets th' untimely grave—
Aurelius died—his relict's pious tear
O'er his lov'd ashes frequent flow'd sincere;
Each decent rite with due observance paid,
Each solemn requiem offer'd to his shade;
Plac'd mid the brave his urn in holy ground,
And bade his hallow'd banners wave around;
Then left the gaudy scenes of pomp and power,
While Prudence beckon'd to that antient bower,
And those paternal fields, the sole remains
Of ample woods, and far-extended plains,
Which tyrant custom rudely tore away
To distant heirship an expected prey.
Serene she sought the far-retired grove
Once the bless'd mansion of her happy love,
Pleas'd with the thought that memory oft would raise
A solemn prospect of those blooming days,
Aurelius gave; her pious purpose now
To keep still constant to her sacred vow,

In lonely luxury her sorrows feed,
And pass her life in widow's decent weed.
One pledge of love, her comfort still remain'd,
Whom in this solitude she careful train'd
To virtuous love, and while, as year by year,
New graces made Aurelia still more dear,
For many an hour unheeded she would trace
The father's semblance in the daughter's face,
While tender sighs oft heav'd her faithful breast,
And sudden tears her lasting love exprest.
Thus long she dwelt, from innate virtues great,
Amid the villagers in sacred state,
For every grace to which submission bows,
The power which conscious dignity bestows,
She felt superior, for from antient race
She gloried her long ancestry to trace,
And ever bade Aurelia's thought aspire
To every grace each ray of sacred fire,
Which full of Heav'n-born dignity informs
The mortal breast, which ardent virtue warms;
Then led her to the venerable hall
Where her successive sires adorn'd the wall,
And arched windows with their blazon bright
Shed thro' the herald glow a solemn light.

There,

There, clad in rough habiliments of war,
Full many a hero bore a glorious scar;
There in the civic fur the sons of Peace
Whose counsels bade their Country's tumults cease;
While by their side, gracing the antient scene,
Hung gentle ladies of most comely mien:
Then eager thro' the ready tale would run,
In what fair cause each honour had been won,
What female grace each virgin had possess'd
To charm to gentle love the manly breast,
Pleas'd to observe how long the generous blood
Thro' fair and brave had pass'd a spotless flood.
Meanwhile the young Aurelia's bosom fir'd,
With emulation by each tale inspired,
In eager transport frequent breath'd her prayer
The graces of her ancestry to share;
Nor breath'd in vain, her fond maternal guide
Cherish'd with care each spark of virtuous pride,
And ever as she gave a lesson new,
Would point some old example to her view.
Inflam'd by this her mind was quickly fraught
With each sage precept which her Mother taught.
The goodly Dame, thus blest in her employ,
Felt each soft transport of parental joy,

And liv'd content, her utmost wish fulfill'd
In the fair prospect of a virtuous child.
Resign'd she waited now the awful hour
When death should raise her to that heav'nly bower,
Where with her lov'd Aurelius she might share
The pleasing task to watch with guardian care
Their offspring's steps, and hovering o'er her head
The gracious dew of heavenly peace to shed.

ELEGY

WRITTEN ON VALENTINE'S MORNING.

[*Printed in Dodsley's Miscellanies.*]

HARK! thro' the sacred silence of the night
Loud Chanticleer doth sound his clarion shrill,
Hailing with song the first pale gleam of light
Which floats the dark brow of yon Eastern hill.

Bright

Bright star of morn, oh! leave not yet the wave
To deck the dewy frontlet of the day;
Nor thou, Aurora, quit Tithonus' cave,
Nor drive retiring darkness yet away.

Ere these my rustic hands a garland twine,
Ere yet my tongue endite a single song,
For her I mean to hail my Valentine,
Sweet maiden, fairest of the virgin throng.

Sweet is the morn, and sweet the gentle breeze,
Which fans the fragrant bosom of the Spring,
Sweet chirps the lark, and sweeter far than these
The gentle love-song gurgling turtles sing.

Oh! let the flowers be fragrant as the morn,
And as the Turtle's song my ditty sweet,
Those flowers my woven chaplet must adorn,
That ditty must my waking charmer greet.

And thou, blest Saint, whom choral creatures join
In one enlivening symphony to hail,
Oh! be propitious, gentle Valentine,
And let each pure and tender sigh prevail.

Oh!

Oh! give me to approach my sleeping love,
And strew her pillow with the freshest flowers,
No sigh unhallow'd shall my bosom move,
Nor step profane pollute my true love's bowers.

At sacred distance only will I gaze,
Nor bid my unreproved eye refrain,
Meanwhile my tongue shall chaunt her beauty's praise,
And hail her sleeping, with the gentlest strain.

Awake, my fair, awake, for it is time;
Hark, thousand songsters rise from yonder grove,
And rising carol this sweet hour of prime,
Each to his mate a roundelay of love.

All nature sings the hymeneal song,
All nature follows where the spring invites;
Come forth, my love; to us these joys belong,
Ours is the spring, and all her young delights.

For us she throws profusely forth the flowers
Which in fresh chaplets joyful I will twine,
Come forth, my fair; oh! do not lose these hours,
But wake and be my faithful Valentine.

Full many an hour, all lonely have I sigh'd,
Nor dar'd the secret of my love reveal,
Full many a fond expedient have I tried
My warmest wish in silence to conceal.

And oft to far retired solitude
All mournfully my slow step have I bent,
Luxurious there indulg'd my musing mood,
And there alone have giv'n my sorrows vent.

This day resolv'd I dare to plight my vow,
This day, long since the feast of love decreed,
Emboldened will I speak my flame, nor thou
Refuse to hear how sore my heart does bleed.

Yet, if I should behold my love awake,
Ah, frail resolves, ah, whither will ye fly?
Full well I know I shall not silence break,
But struck with awe, almost for fear shall die.

Oh no, I will not trust a faultering speech
In broken phrase an awkward tale to tell,
A tale whose tenderness no tongue can reach,
Nor softest melody can utter well.

But my meek eye, best herald to my heart
I will compose to soft and downcast look,
And at one humble glance it shall impart
My love, nor fear the language be mistook.

For she will read (apt scholar at this lore)
With what fond passion my true bosom glows,
How hopeless of return I still adore,
Nor dare the boldness of my wish disclose.

Should she then smile—yet, ah, she smiles on all,
Her gentle temper pities all distress:
On every hill, each vale, the sun-beams fall,
Each herb, each flower, each tree, each shrub they bless.

Alike all nature grateful owns the boon,
The universal ray to all is free;
Like fond Endymion should I hope the moon
Because among the rest, she shines on me.

Hope, vain presumer, keep, oh keep away,
Ev'n if my woe her gentle bosom move,
Pity some look of kindness may display,
But each soft glance is not a look of love.

Yet, heavenly visitant, thou dost not quit
These bowers where angels sweet division sing,
Nor deignest thou on mortal shrine to sit
Alone, for round thee ever on the wing,

Glad choirs of loves attend, and hovering wait
Thy mild command; of these thy blooming train,
Oh bid some sylph, in morning dreams relate,
Ere yet my love awake, my secret pain.

TO E. H. 1774.

SONNET IN ANSWER TO ONE RECEIVED.

Heedless if fame my lov'd amusements crown,
My hand unskill'd and timid knows not how
From that fair laurel stem to snatch a bough,
Whose branches shade the temple of renown.

Enough

Enough for me, if, when at eve serene,
From mould'ring tow'rs or unfrequented groves
Where fancy-form'd at dusk the spectre roves,
Return'd my careless stroke, recal the scene,
Enough, if as around my table plac'd,
Curious the ruins of old Time to view,
With boyish eagerness the stripling eye
Attends delighted, deems the picture true,
And, from the feeble semblance I have trac'd,
Learns a due reverence for antiquity.

SONNET TO W. G. 1792.

For thee, the liveliest tints of Nature blow,
For thee the blushes mild at opening morn,
To thee 'tis giv'n to mark her evening glow,
And with its vivid ray thy verse adorn.
Proceed, nor check thy fancy's warmest flow,
Nor dread the chilling of a Critic's scorn,

That

That fatal blast the minstrel ne'er shall know
Who under Nature's lenient hand is born,
She with a parent fondness goes before
And treads the path thy ready step pursues;
Mark but the magic of her simple lore,
Then tune the song for thy descriptive Muse,
For while to thee she opens every store,
'Twere churlish offered bounties to refuse.

SONNET TO W. G. 1796.

William, these careless and too flippant days
Oft turn our thoughts to graver thoughts of old,
When every shepherd, careful of his fold,
Aim'd at no higher than the homely praise,
To watch his sheep, and point the peaceful ways
To pastures green where waters gently roll'd;
And when at eve the distant curfew toll'd,
Around his flock the guarding pen to raise.

Such

Such are thy cares, and such thine humble choice,
Following the path the Master Shepherd trod,
Thou cheerest with a soft benignant voice,
A flock still watching thy directing nod.
He who thus tends the sheep-fold shall rejoice
When call'd from earth to an approving God.

PLESHY.

To R. G. occasioned by a Ride to Pleshy from Chelmsford. 1762.

If e'er delight one happy hour prepare
Absent from those who claim my tenderest care,
If from domestic joys I ever roam,
Or feel a bliss at distance from my home,
Friend of my youth, 'tis when, from business free,
Retirement finds a careless hour with thee;
To recollect (while Fancy's magic glass
Decks with new glow the visions as they pass)

Where

Where we have ranged, thro' what sequester'd bower
O'er what rough ruin, or what hoary tower.
Fond to recall one solemn scene to view,
Could but my pencil trace the picture true,
I fain would bid the mimic goddess rise,
And give again the prospect to our eyes;
When o'er the top of every antient oak
Gradual the gleam of morn unclouded broke,
When the brown foliage in the rising ray
Gave gloomy richness to the autumn day.
Slowly we pass'd, no cheerful village swain
With lively roundelay inspir'd the plain,
No whirling wheel buzz'd on the cottage floor,
Nor playful children ran about the door,
On bank or hedge beside each devious road
No florid face with labour's vigour glow'd.
'Twas silence—save that now and then a knell
Knoll'd pausing from some distant village-bell.
The wicket clos'd at every thatch confess'd
The Sabbath sacred still to rural rest.
This calm our minds to such a temper wrought
As sooths the luxury of solemn thought,
While warm imagination loves to stray
To distant times, and mark each hallow'd way

Our

Our fathers trod, and in her sacred cell
Revering Memory delights to dwell,
And unrestrain'd amid her various hoard
Cull each fair act, and note each generous word
Which antient valour did, or wisdom spoke,
When from the breast the rising transport broke;
When, unabash'd by custom's witching charm,
At Nature's voice the passions took alarm;
When all were free, when every action glow'd
Warm from the heart, from whence spontaneous flow'd
Strong-featur'd virtue, manly, bold, sublime,
Or the curst vigour of abandon'd crime.
  Warm'd by the magic view of elder days,
When radiant valour gained immortal praise,
Unnotic'd we each devious track pursue,
Till Pleshy's humble roofs arose to view,
And that low turret which remains alone
Poor relic of those walls which once were known
The country round, when with sad sullen air
Gloster's proud battlements stood frowning there:
When the bold keep, high rais'd with martial show,
O'erlook'd the numerous spires which rose below;
Where, as the still returning summons rang,
The surplic'd Priest his sacred service sang;

 These

These friendly walls a pious shelter gave,
For here their murder'd master found a grave:
Nor he alone; within their holy round
Full many a noble corpse has burial found,
And long the humble hind did thoughtful pass
When here he trod the monumental brass;
Still to his list'ning sons he loves to tell
The village's old fame, and pausing dwell
On each sad circumstance of Gloster's woes,
Pointing the track where once his turrets rose.
Now scarce a stone remains—no massive door
Grates on harsh hinges o'er the ruin'd floor;
No pointed arch, with dread porteullis hung,
Bids horror stalk the timid hinds among;
No deep dark dungeon strikes the soul with fear,
Nor swelling towers their threat'ning terrors rear.
Yet still remains, and marks the antient bound,
The bold abutment of the outer mound;
Still with a slow and pausing step we tread
High o'er the lofty arch, and thence are led
To mount the keep, whose hard access of yore
A moat defended, but defends no more;
For where of old did guardian waters flow,
Now spreading ash and humbler elders grow.

Yet,

Yet, on this spot, where none but peasants tread,
(Save when, by love of antient manners led
To view the place, some kindred spirit strays,
Fond to recall the pomp of elder days).
England's High Constables in Gothic state
Dwelt, 'mid obeying hinds, severely great;
And, on this distant and unnotic'd plain,
Proud dignity upheld a haughty reign.

When England's sword unsteady Richard sway'd,
Here Gloster dwelt, by vassals bold obey'd,
From courts retir'd, his ever active soul
Indulg'd empassion'd thoughts without controul;
And, while with scornful eye he look'd askaunce
On trivial courtly pomps, the spawn of France;
Pleas'd he would recollect, with British pride,
How Sable* Wales their puny force defy'd;
Wrapt in the patriot trance, with passion swore,
Had he the rule, weak peace should be no more,
But, bold in arms, each British youth should tread,
Till haughty France had lower'd her recreant head:
" But no, poor England, where is now her king?
" No more shall prostrate nations tribute bring,

* The Black Prince.

" No more as when my Royal Father reign'd,
" And my bold Brother idle peace disdain'd,
" High thro' the World, rever'd her name shall sound,
" For manly grace, and martial deeds renown'd;
" Her king now wantons in the ladies' bowers,
" And in the lap of dalliance wastes his hours:
" In curst luxurious draughts he drowns his cares,
" While languid lutes are tun'd to feeble airs.
" No clarion sounds—nor in the listed fields
" Do valiant knights their massy lances wield.
" No vigorous sports call manly youth to arms,
" Nor mimic combats train to war's alarms.
" Old Gloster 's heard no more, while flatt'ry near
" Pours her fell poison in the royal ear,
" While cringing slaves, whom foreign courts command,
" Tear the dear entrails of his native land.
" What in a court like this could Gloster do?
" His plain unstudied language, frank and true,
" His eager soul, all warm with patriot fire,
" His tongue, which hoarsely speaks his plain desire,
" His wrinkled front, his frowns which seldom cease,
" Are all too rude for these weak times of peace."
Thus, on this spot, in melancholy state,
The sullen patriot murmur'd at his fate.

One evening, early, while the steady ray
Retain'd the fervour of a sultry day,
When round the new-shorn grass fresh fragrance shed,
And sweets sprang wild beneath the heifer's tread,
The good old man, his temp'rate supper o'er,
More calm than usual, sat before his door,
And, almost happy, wish'd no other reign
Than here to rule, the patriarch of the plain;
Ambition slumber'd, and his lofty mien
Was sooth'd to mildness by the peaceful scene:
When sudden clarions echo'd thro' the wood,
And soon before the gate his Monarch stood.
Old Gloster rose, due welcome to afford,
As loyal Baron to his Sovereign Lord;
Nor less officious was his noble dame,
To pay each right which Royalty could claim.
Small preparation sudden welcomes bring;
His hasty supper ended soon, the King
Summon'd to next day's council; at the gate
The ready steeds their noble burthens wait.
Eager again his Monarch's cares to share,
And lead his youth from flattery's hidden snare,
The Patriot quickly left his calm abode,
And follow'd but by few attendants rode.

The treacherous King kept foremost on the plain,
While numerous courtiers fill'd his royal train.
Of these, a chosen band their lesson knew,
Bred in deceit, and still to treason true,
Who, while the King press'd on his eager steed,
Kept near the Duke, check'd by degrees his speed,
And, while the Monarch far advanc'd before,
That Gloster's voice could reach his ear no more,
Th' appointed Marshal seiz'd the hoary sage;
His arm, once vigorous, weaken'd now by age,
Still valiant, did he raise, but rais'd in vain;
Ruthless they bore him to a foreign land,
Lamented victim of their murd'ring hand.

Friend of my Youth, thy partial eye surveys,
With unreproving look my trivial lays,
Tho' Censure, mask'd in Wisdom's sacred dress,
Should bid me now no more the Muse caress,
Tho' Truth should tell how many a year has past,
Since Manhood o'er my limbs the robe has cast,
Tho' hoary hairs with certainty presage
The hast'ning footstep of approaching age,
Though languid Genius warn to quit these toys,
And leave the field of fancy to my boys;

Yet

Yet Friendship, ever partial, will excuse
Whate'er fond Memory dictates to the Muse;
Will recollect that here in earliest youth,
Ere Reason sought the sober page of Truth,
While Fancy rul'd, that here my boyish eye
Caught the first glimmer of antiquity;
That, on the edge of Pleshy's swelling mound,
My foot first felt the tread of hallow'd ground;
In playful hours, from neighb'ring fields I stray'd,
With wond'ring look these massy banks survey'd;
While the grey peasant, pausing o'er his ale,
Told from tradition each eventful tale;
And lost at once in rapture and surprize,
Felt the first love of antient manners rise.

THE REIGN OF COMMON SENSE.

TO SOME LADIES, IN RETURN FOR A TABLE PAINTED BY THEM.

In antient days, when Nymphs were wont to rove
With heedless steps the scarcely peopled grove,
If chance e'er led them to some lovelier spot,
With playful negligence they form'd the grot,
Culling with native taste from every thorn
The fragrant bloom, their structure to adorn,
Where, from the moss-clad roof, sweet shade at noon,
Each flow'ret dropt into a gay festoon.

If here, by love of contemplation led,
Some son of Fancy roving chanc'd to tread,
Charm'd, he the lovely architect would deem
Dryad or Naiad of the grove or stream.

In modern days, no gauze-clad damsels stray,
Where briar or thorn impedes the devious way;
Yet, taught by Nature, and improved by taste,
They mock the wildest beauties of the waste,
Catch from the desert shrub the native bloom
To give new splendour to the drawing-room,

And

And with the imitative hand of art,
To rudest brambles graceful forms impart.
In these grave times, when sober sense prevails,
When not a child believes in fairy tales,
When not a genius haunts the hallow'd glade,
When not a ghost frequents the yew-tree's shade,
In vain would Fancy's veteran form a dream,
Or tell a tale of haunted grove, or stream;
In vain the Muse the floating line prolong,
Alas! no power is given to sacred song:
No Venus now assumes a Cloe's face,
Or treads, conceal'd, behind a mortal grace;
No Pallas prompts the busy hand of art,
Proud in a human work to boast a part.
Since, then, the magic powers of Fiction fail,
Plain Truth must come, and tell a simple tale:
One eve, return'd from Luxury's tiresome board,
From stranger form to household ease restor'd,
In the broad pannel a fair frame was found,
Where oaken wreaths the blushing holly bound,
Here, when returning winters cloud the days,
With vestal fire shall waxen tapers blaze,
While Truth shall tell—and mark her voice divine,
That Friends to Friendship rais'd the grateful shrine.

TO H. B. C. AT RAMSGATE.

HENCE, bewitching Sorceress—hence!
Thy charm is broken—Indolence.
From thy enchanting dream I wake,
And from thy silken fetters break.
Prudence has yet ne'er form'd a plan
To dub me Knight and Alderman,
Or rob me of domestic pleasure,
Which sweetens every hour of leisure.
I yet can call the careless Muse,
Nor does she yet her rhime refuse.
Yet is the vacant hour employ'd
In what my boyish days enjoy'd;
And, tho' th' effect of age increases,
Amusement comes when business ceases.
Nor need I for relief repair
To slumbers in an elbow chair;
Or seek the tedious hours to fill
With solemn whist, or quaint quadrille.
There is, I 've found it many a time,
A nonsense only fit for rhime,

Like

Like fungus on a dunghill, grows
In metre, but decays in prose;
Such as what I 've already said,
And you, perhaps, have peevish read,
Were it not for its motley clothing
Would seem, just what it is, a Nothing.
If folks will to the sea-coast roam
Who might live quietly at home,
To gratify an idle notion
Of wholesome washing in the ocean;
Or bracing walk on Ramsgate-pier,
Marking the rough winds as they veer;
Or watch, to furnish evening prattle,
The thong which cracks o'er mail-coach cattle;
Blest vehicle, which carries down
Diurnal gossip from the town,
What can they hope for which is better
Than Nothing in a London letter?
For I, who never form my creed
From journals which I do not read,
Or e'er sit down to put together
Reports of any thing but weather,
Without the art of letter-writing,
Can frame no tiding more inviting

Than what plain Madge's letters tell,
That I and all our folks are well;
That yesterday the sky was clearing,
To-day we 're darker, clouds appearing.
From friend to friend what need of more,
'Tis not from learning's richest store,
It is not from the tongue of art,
The accent comes which strikes the heart.
To you, my friend, who, truly wise,
(I mean in quitting the Excise),
Disdain'd to sacrifice yourself
To that accursed Moloch Pelf,
Who, scorning what the vain pursue,
Keep real happiness in view,
For bliss abroad while worldlings roam,
Look for your comforts at your home;
What tidings can give more delight
Than these, the home-spun truths I write,
Of moderate health, from simple diet,
Of out-door sunshine, in-door quiet?

FORNHAM, 1808.

On Fornham's undistinguish'd plain
Calm ease and privacy remain;
And there alone I seem to meet
True Freedom's unmolested seat:
There can my random Fancy range
O'er lengthen'd life's scarce notic'd change;
And there, in distant prospect, view
Scenes which in early life were new.
Successive seasons have remov'd,
By gradual lapse, the friends we lov'd.
The world, grown thin to us—around
How few, how very few, are found!
Then wonder not that Fornham's bowers
Give pleasure to my aged hours;
For there, and almost only there,
My moments pass unting'd by care.

The following Lines were written to my Brother on his sending to me a Drawing of BOCONNOC PARSONAGE, *with this Motto:*

Prærupti nemoris patientem *vivere dorso.*

To live at the back of a pleasant old grove
Which slopes down the mountain's steep side,
Enjoying at leisure the quiet I love,
Job's *patience* was never so tried.
But should Fortune still favours more ample bestow,
And all Lynch's preferments be mine;
Tho' the weight of the cross * on my back she should throw,
She would find me a patient divine.
Of temper so meek, and of suffering so long,
Should she more of her burthens still push on,
Imprison'd in state, surplic'd Prebends among,
I could *patiently* press a dean's cushion.

* The Mastership of St. Cross, a rich sinecure.

Written

Written in January 1777.

A distant Imitation of VIRGIL'S *First Eclogue.*

(Melibœus, an American Refugee.)

M. BENEATH the shadow of the British oak,
You, Tityrus, your Sylvan Muse invoke;
By faction from my native fields compell'd,
From each plain joy my bosom lov'd withheld,
With fond regret my country's bounds I leave,
Alas, no freedom left me, but to grieve;
While you at ease each vacant hour employ,
Thrice happy master of each rural joy.

T. Yes, Melibœus, all these joys are mine,
All these are owing to a Power Divine.—
That Power still sacred shall be held by me;
These are the gifts of heaven-born liberty.
To Freedom still I 'll raise each morning song,
To Freedom's praise my evening strains prolong,
While on these plains I tune the rustic lay,
Where at their will my numerous heifers stray.

M. Un-

M. Unenvied still may every bliss be thine,
To wonder, not regret thy lot, be mine,
To wonder that, while Faction's voice alarms
Each father's ear, and calls each son to arms:
While those unhappy fields where late I stray'd
The terrors of intestine war invade:
While vengeful wounds our untill'd acres stain,
Still peace and plenty smile on Britain's plain.

Far different tales had shock'd our faithful ears,
And tidings of strange import rais'd our fears,
While every wind from every distant shore
On Faction's wing designing falsehoods bore,
We heard, with wonder, that the powerful hand
Which still had guarded our defenceless land,
Which, pointing still to each improving plan,
Had rais'd us up from infancy to man,
Now grasp'd Oppression's scourge, with dire intent
Our future prosperous harvests to prevent.
That not for us we should our fleeces shear,
Nor longer for ourselves our younglings rear.
That we with slavish toil should waste each hour
To raise a produce for usurping power.
That Freedom, banish'd from her antient seat,
Now sought in Western climes a last retreat.

That

That we no more increasing flocks must tend,
But to strait spears the reaping-hook unbend;
At Freedom's call must forge the labouring spade,
And form the ploughshare to an hostile blade;
Unwilling, tho' she left the British shore,
Where slaves to monarchs flattering incense pour.
But friends to us remain'd a hardy band,
The genuine sons of that once happy land.
That, call'd to arms by Valour's sacred cry,
Th' embattled people to our aid would fly,
That discontent led on a surly train,
And riot trampled on each fruitful plain;
That every valley echo'd war's alarms,
Nor London's lofty towers were free from arms:
Oh, tell me, Tityrus, what friendly power
Thy flock protected in that dreadful hour?

T. No dreadful hour like this has Britain known:
From Brunswick sprung, a Monarch fills her throne:
Know, every year, when Autumn's shadows rise,
And dank November clouds the lowering skies,
Clear festal faggots in each sheep-cote blaze,
And swains memorial songs of Freedom raise.

Once

Once Superstition rang her iron knell
(I 've heard my grandsire oft the story tell),
How slavery scowl'd in popish Stuart's reign,
And who the king who drove her from the plain.
From him inheriting, a glorious line
Of Monarchs in Britannia's annals shine,
Pleas'd every rural merit to reward,
Oppression's foe, and Freedom's surest guard.

M. Told by the friendly tongue of hoary truth,
Such tales were taught me in my early youth;
Whole summer days I 've listened on the plain
To hear Menalcas breathe the grateful strain,
To hear the reverend seer his accents raise,
Whene'er he utter'd his lov'd Britain's praise;
And, by his animated accents charm'd,
Friendship to Britain still my bosom warm'd.
Condemn'd for this to leave my antient fields,
And quit each joy a shepherd's pastime yields,
From those blest lands where Justice fix'd her seat,
Where Penn led Freedom to a calm retreat,
Where faithful purchase sanctified each claim,
And never Indian curst invasion's flame;

A ba-

A banish'd Man, o'er distant seas I come,
Driv'n from that seat of peace, my rural home:
Why should suspicion Shepherd's cot invade?
Why dire mistrust alarm the rural glade?
No black portent approaching ill foretold,
No blasting night-dew chill'd the sick'ning fold.
I saw no baleful comet horrid rise,
Or war embattled blaze in Northern skies.
Secure in peace, I thought no danger near,
And what I did not feel, I could not fear.
From distant cots the dire magicians came,
Spreading with baleful spell dissension's flame,
Around them throng'd a rough, disorder'd rout,
Who to their cry return'd an echoing shout,
Discordant clamours pierc'd the vaulted sky,
All harsh and jarring as the screech-owls cry.

T. Where plenty bless'd the ever cheerful plain,
Where peace still guarded Freedom's happy reign,
Sure pow'rful songs of tuneful Seers prevail'd,
When Magic's dissonance each ear assail'd,
Sure Bards would rise, in arts superior, bold,
And drive the curst enchanters from the fold.

M. Alas!

M. Alas! 'gainst Riot's voice what sound was heard?
No rustic pipe the drooping valley cheer'd,
For, did a swain attempt a peaceful song,
Strait rose a cry of tumult from the throng;
From riot when discordant shouts proceed,
Ah! who can hear the sound of shepherds' reed?
Wild, as when wolves from distant hills descend,
Or raging tempests rooted forests rend,
Thro' every field the rushing ravage spread,
At once the shepherd's wonder and his dread.

T. Sooner shall fish the river's bed forsake,
Or stags seek pasture in the floated lake;
The Northern Tyne thro' Sarum's verdure flow,
Or Cheviot Hills with Devon's warmth shall glow,
Ere thankless I forget the due applause
Of Freedom, guarded by Britannia's laws.

M. But, forc'd to wander from our native home,
Thro' different climes sad fugitives we roam,
Some on the Southern islands scorching shore
Their help from grudging penury implore,
Some shelter'd in Britannia's friendly isle,
Tho' cheer'd by every hospitable smile,

Yet,

Yet, still to a too distant region borne,
The shingled cot, their sole dominion, mourn.
Still from our sight our infant dwellings hid,
Does Fate, too cruel, our return forbid.
Or, may we hope from Britain's aiding hand
Again to reach in peace our plunder'd land?
Shall the rude warrior tread our cultur'd field?
For him our furrows future harvests yield?
Ruffian! for thee did I each acre sow?
Alas! what ills from civil discord flow!
In vain I plant new fruits in order'd range,
In vain with hoarded sheaves I load the grange.
Farewel, my fields, farewel, ye spreading oaks,
Farewel each echo of the woodman's strokes,
No more shall I, where elms' broad branches shade,
See numerous fleeces whiten all the glade;
No more in song each vacant hour employ,
Farewel, a long farewel, to every joy.

T. This night my cottage may afford you rest,
And I am with autumnal riches blest,
Ripe fruits in plenty crown the humble board,
With milk and cheeses is the dairy stor'd.

Lo,

Lo, shadows lengthen now from every oak,
And all around the cottage chimneys smoak,
Come then with me, enjoy my evening fare,
Let hope's mild radiance cheer forlorn despair;
Tho' low'ring clouds deform the evening skies,
Yet clear and calm succeeding suns may rise.

TO NAIMBANNA.

FRAGMENT.

To lands where Liberty her standard rears,
Where gentle Pity dries the widow's tears,
Where Charity conducts deserted youth
From Error's mazes to the paths of Truth,
And spreads her lenient influence to assuage
Each ill which threatens unprotected age;
Where, as he walks, the wretched Lazarus sees
Shelter and remedy for each disease,

I bid

I bid you welcome—Welcome to the shore
Where Sharp has taught that slavery treads no more;
Where friendly hands contending parties join
To raise on Afric's shore fair Freedom's shrine;
Where Wilberforce, with mild persuasive charm,
Arrests the scourge in the brute Tyrant's arm;
Where Pitt, correct in eloquence, subdues
By reason's power the selfish trader's views;
Where Fox, with every energetic art,
Subdues the judgment, and assails the heart;
Where, from remotest Thulé's utmost bounds,
From every shore the British sea surrounds,
From tow'r-crown'd cities, and from village spires,
The people's voice the sacred boon requires.
The thoughts of Afric's injuries engage
The mitred prelate, and the beaver'd sage;
And Britain's Genius, pity to infuse,
Call'd the mild influence of a Barbauld's Muse.
Say, Naimbanna, at so blest a land,
Arriv'd from Afric's desolated sand;
Canst thou, accustom'd to a lawless crew
Of ravagers, believe the picture true;
Canst thou believe that Britain's favour'd Isle
Could send an herd of reprobates so vile,

Of men regardless of each human claim,
As those who dar'd assume her sacred name:
Driv'n to thy shores by inauspicious gales,
While desolation mark'd their blood-stain'd sails;
While horror follow'd where they led the way,
Bold but in plunder, and mankind their prey.

[*Naimbanna died, so no more was written.*]

T. F. F.

Died 26 March, 1806.

LIFE's business past, in this sequester'd spot,
The call of friendship fix'd his latest lot,
Unanxious to obtain the vacant stare,
The notice which the vulgar make their care.
Of wealth, ev'n to his utmost wish, possess'd,
And with the power of blessing, others bless'd.
When failing harvests rais'd the peasant's fear,
Where want alarm'd, his ready help was near.

Where

Where scarce a spring for many a mile was found,
Or, buried deep, diffus'd no comfort round,
He from the soil bid hidden waters burst,
Where now the wearied peasant checks his thirst.
The Master Shepherd led to this abode,
This glen thro' which the streams of comfort flow'd;
His crook conducting in the shadowy vale,
Death's gloomy path, no terrors could assail;
But, at an age when vital powers must cease,
Death came, the harbinger of endless peace.

VERSES

WRITTEN IN LONDON,

ON THE

APPROACH OF SPRING.

——————— *Pallas quas condidit Arces*
Ipsa colat, nobis placeant ante omnia Sylvæ.

VIRGIL.

EARLY the sun his radiant axle guides,
Sloping his steep course with the Pleiades;
On ev'ry fragrant briar the flowret blooms,
And the wild woodlark chaunts his early song
In heedless carol, to the smiling hours,
Young Maia's festive train; their wavy dance
She jocund leads, and from her horn profuse
Pours roses, violets, woodbines, eglantine,
Fair Flora's dower, what time the youthful Spring
Clasp'd her all blushing in a secret bower:
Thou the mild offspring of their warm embrace,
Oh lovely May, and these thine heritage,
Which bounteous thou with an unsparing hand

Scatterest

Scatterest to all, tho' chief thou lov'st to deck
The village Phœbe's brow, and fairer far
Is thy adorning, than the sunny glow
Of Eastern ruby, ill assorted grace
That decks not but deforms the faded cheek
Of the wan courtier.—Far more raptur'd greets
Fancy's fond ear, where'er she musing roves
Thy minstrelsy untutor'd, than the trill
And languid descant of Italian art.
Yet sings the woodlark, and the hawthorn blooms,
Unheard the song, the fragrance unperceiv'd
By me; tho' not among the sons of men
There lives, who listens with more raptur'd ear,
Or feels more lively, Nature's varied boon.
Bereav'd of every pleasure Nature gives,
Each plain but heart-felt rapture, what is wealth?
In artful mazes we but toil for bliss:
True Pleasure dwells not in the arched roof,
She sings no carol to the midnight ball;
The loaded board and Bacchus' flustering draughts
In vain are tried; for, ah! she dwells not there,
She dwells not with such rude ill-manner'd mirth,
But seeks with her mild sister Cheerfulness
The russet plain, there prompts the virgin's song,

Breathes the brisk carol from the cottage reed,
Strikes the quick tabor glad with echoing pulse,
And animates the village holiday.
Nor then alone, but when his daily toil
Calls the good swain, she early joins his step,
For the mild radiance of the opening dawn
Gives to her sight the wide-extended view
Of hill and dale, hoar forest, flow'ring heath,
Rich harvest, verdant meadow, where the stream
Rolls far its plenteous wave, and all around
To Pleasure's ear most grateful, thousand birds
Are rising to hymn out their morning song.
And thou, the sweetest songster of the grove,
Bewitching Philomel! from the close shade
Pourest thy descant on the raptur'd ear.
Thou too at eve, when, all his labour o'er
He at the furrow's end unyokes the steer,
And seeks with weary step his rest at home,
Dost with thy tranquil warble sooth his soul;
Best prelude to the peace his cottage gives.
There, at the door, his numerous offspring watch
Their sire's return, and eager run to tell
The tiding of his coming, while his dame
Plies her glad evening care, to deck the board

With

With food uncater'd by the baleful hand
Of Luxury, and fittest to refresh
His toil-worn spirit, and her smiling welcome
Gives its due relish to the simple fare.
What are to this the proud luxurious feasts,
The city's boast, where distant colonies
Of East and Western worlds must be explor'd
To strike the fickle palate's feeble sense
With faint delight; oh what are all our joys,
Ev'n those of Monarchs, to the thousand beauties
That strike the soul of Nature's genuine son?
Can Art's best mimicry their form express?
Can rich Loraine mix up the glowing tint
Bright as Aurora? can he form a shade
To strike the fancy with a gloom so solemn
As ev'ry thicket, copse, or secret grove,
At twilight hour affords? can savage Rosa
With aught so wildly noble fill the mind,
As where the antient oak in the wood's depth
Has shed his leafy honours, and around
The woodman with fell axe has lower'd the pride
Of many a tall tree, he deserted stands
A barren trunk, while rude winds howl around,
And dreary torrents lash his naked limbs?

Meantime

Meantime the rifting thunder dreadful roars,
The vivid lightnings flash, and elements
Conjoin'd pour out their wrath, as if to rend
The lone, defenceless, aged, feeble oak.
Such scenes awake Imagination's powers
To sacred thought, such Rosa cannot paint;
'Tis his alone to show the shatter'd trunk;
The wind's keen howl, the thunder's awful sound,
The dreary rain, these mock the pencil's power.
Can aught of artful music sooth the soul
To so serene a temper, as the flight
Of songsters in the grove? or can thy strain,
(Tho' there enchantment strike the magic chord)
Oh matchless Purcell! with so wild a charm
Transport the mind, as when at dusk of eve
From the hoar battlement the lone owl's cry
Pierces the awful silence, and the fall'n
And time-worn hollow towers convey the sound
To the near wood, where in the devious path
The son of Nature wanders, on his ear
The faint sound murmurs, strait the distant low
Of unyok'd heifer, strait the cuckow's note
He hears, while oft the roving Zephyr's tread
Rustling alarms him, and the measur'd step

Of the slow steer, who brushes thro' the thicket
To seek his food, beats duly regular.
As on he passes, thro' the opening bower
He sees the pale Moon rising, clouds on clouds
Pil'd mountainous awhile obstruct her beam,
Till lab'ring thence she lift her silver brow,
And pours her full ray on the ivy'd steeple.
And hark its bell now tolls the minute knell,
And thro' the churchway path the surplic'd priest
Walks slowly forward, while the snowy pall
Cov'ring the relicks of some love-lorn virgin
Passes with awful pace along the glade.

Wrapt harmonist! what tho' thy studied chord
Can sound the slow knell, echo to the note
The lone owl utters, breathe the heifer's low,
And mark the funeral step with pausing cadence,
And music can no more; where is the tower
O'er-hung with ivy, seen by the pale Moon
Whose faint beam glimmers on the snowy pall?
Where are the rocky clouds from whence she breaks?
Yet do not these, does not the rustling breeze
And the slow-treading heifer add delight?
Do not accordant senses join to fill
The musing mind with calm and holy peace?

And can the City, by the utmost force
Of mimic art, with labour'd imitation
So soothe the soul, or give such mild delight?
  Ye gay and sportive votaries of Joy,
Forgive the thoughtless Muse, for she has led
To talk of pleasing horror, and the bliss
Which Melancholy gives, ye cannot form
Amid the circling follies, which urge on
Your laughing hours, perhaps ye cannot form
A notion of these joys, and with a taunt
Of high contempt, despise the wild enthusiasm.
Yet on the well-trod stage have ye not seen
Your Roscius fir'd by the natural Bard,
Immortal Shakspeare, wander the bleak heath
A poor and outcast king, nor blame the winds
Whose keen tooth seiz'd his age, nor chide the elements
For their unkindness, while the ruffling storm
Tore the proud garments from his shiv'ring trunk,
And the fierce lightnings fir'd his madd'ning brain?
Have ye not then felt horror; would ye not
Change your rich pomp for Edgar's ruin'd roof,
And be the poor king's host?—have ye not wish'd
To range with Rosaline the forest wild,
Or live beneath the shelter of some oak

With

With melancholy Jaques? Tell me why then
Ye look'd on wealth and greatness with a scorn?
Why but because the Muse with native strength
Pour'd truth on Fancy's eye, and yet the Muse
Can only give, ev'n in her warmest glow,
A faint resemblance, nor has she such force
To strike as Nature has; alas! her voice
But wakes remembrance of our absent bliss;
And when she sings of incense-breathing Spring
She wafts no odour to the longing sense,
But only prompts our sigh, that we must dwell
Confin'd in the full City, distant far
From every scene of rural innocence,
Whose woods, whose shades, whose storms, whose funerals,
Ev'n raise a sense of pleasure. What can then
The brighter views, what can the happy hour
That gives the blushing bride to the true arms
Of faithful Damon? Thenot pleas'd revives
To former youth, and gayest of the day
Provokes the village mirth, and from his soul
Enjoys the spousal of his boy, who scarce
(O'ercome with rapture) can himself conduct
His festival, and but for busy Thenot

Each

Each due rite were neglected, and the guests
Unbidden by the tabor's sprightly sound
To seek the green, and in the jocund dance
Each maiden with her youth breathe sport and joy,
Save the still happier pair, their greater bliss
Fills the whole breast, nor leaves a vacant place
For lighter mirth, unnotic'd speaks the pipe,
They hear no sound but the endearing voice
Of mutual love, they do not mark the joy
In every face around; for their attention,
Fix'd on each other, watches every glance
Diffused by the lovely languid eye.
Well may all else be unperceiv'd, for who
Observes bright Hesper dart his pointed ray,
When riding high mild Cynthia pours serene
Her steady beam; oh, tell me, when compar'd
To these true raptures, what's the shadowy pomp
And artful splendour, when the golden shackles
Fetter two venal souls, by interest call'd
To prostitute the ever-hallow'd rites
Of holy Hymen?—On the village plain
Nought joins but mutual love, no sordid thought
Promotes unnatural union, but the flame
That first united glows throughout their life,

A steady

A steady fire, whose unabating light
Gilds youth with rapture, and with fost'ring warmth
Cheers drooping age, who smiling sees his offspring
Step forth to claim the joys he celebrates
With annual hospitality, what time
The circling year brings round the happy day
That shower'd down blessings on him, when it gave
To his fond vow the willing Sylvia's charms,
Then blooming young, now hoary, but her heart
Unchang'd by Time, for still the same desire
To add to every joy, or fondly soothe
Each woe he feels, reigns unabated there;
His social roof receives each welcome guest,
His open heart diffuses round his pleasure,
And each plain neighbour with unfeigning tongue
Congratulates his bliss. Who would not leave
For these sincere delights, the pageant pomp,
The rich array, the courtly formal speech
Unutter'd by the heart, the birth-day wish
Of venal hirelings, who for interest croud
The glittering levee? Happier (Reason deems
View'd in each light) the simple village life
Than all that Courtiers wish, or Kings bestow.
Kings cannot give a boon of so rich price

As are thy smiles, O lovely Health! and thou,
Shunning the tumult, to the rural green
Retirest; there not built by mortal hand
Stands on the Southern slope of the fresh hill
Thy temple, from whose roof the eglantine
And vagrant woodbine hang, and at the porch
Sits thy good priestess Ease, administ'ring
To Exercise (who up the gentle slope
By moderate footing moves) the holy cup
Of Temperance, Nymph of the crystal spring
That wells beneath thy altar, and from thence
Warbling with gentle lapse joins the full stream
That winding wild delays its silver course
In the rich mead, whose bank the peasant oft
Approaches to allay his thirst, and quaffs
The simple beverage from thy limpid fount.
Bright Virgin, thee of all the pow'rs who range
The rural plain, I woo with constant vow
Most ardent, deign around my temples bind
Thy fragrant wreath, and deck my purpled cheek
With thy rich glow. Then undisturb'd the mind
Calm can pursue its holy meditation,
And wrapt in trance, can trace a thousand gifts
Shower'd by the gracious hand of Nature's King

To

To deck the various field; the wond'ring eye
Roams o'er the fair creation, then to Heaven
Unbidden soars; for the full soul, imprest
With holy transport, there directs its view
From whence its blessings flow, and the rapt voice
Accordant hymns the grateful song of Praise.
The rapid gusts of passion, which or pride,
Or folly, or the thousand varying forms
Of courtly affectation ever raise,
Here all subside, and the compos'd breast
Expands with love, and to its utmost pow'r
Diffuses blessings to mankind, nor fears
Ingratitude should check, or Pride should spurn
The offer'd bounties of the generous heart.
Bless'd be the day, and doubly bless'd the hour,
When my Fidele with unfeigned vow
Gave her fond hand, and own'd her constant love;
Tho' since that hour already thrice the sun
From ev'ry sign has seen our growing bliss,
And tho' thy smile of unaffected love
Adds joy to every joy, and charms to ease
The brow of Care, tho' thou art all that Heav'n
Could give in woman, tenderness, and truth,
And all my heart e'er wish'd, when warmest Fancy

Form'd

Form'd the fond future view of household bliss;
Yet happier still perhaps our lot had been,
Hadst thou beneath the rural thatch receiv'd
My faithful vow, and we had never heard
Of towns or city life, a Marian thou
And rustic Corin I. Then on the plain
Contented we might pass life's little day.
While youth with sprightly beam illum'd our hours
They would move on with joy; and when at noon
Firm manhood call'd us forth to till the soil,
And with our lab'ring hand direct the plough,
We would be ready, nor refuse the task,
Due tribute to the public; till at eve
Our vigour lost, when age came creeping on,
We would unyoke our heifers, and retire
To welcome Ease, our best skill then employ'd
At our own home, attentive there to thatch
The chinks which Time had made, and to root up
Each foul weed that deform'd our little plot.
This business over, calm we should attend
Th' approaching hour of our eternal rest;
And when it came, borne to our peaceful grave
By the plain villager; what tho' no tomb
Of sculptur'd marble call'd the passing eye

To read our story, yet the cottage tear
Should on our ashes fall, and the good heart
O'erflow sincerely for a neighbour lost;
Upon our bier the virgin troop would hang
Fresh-woven chaplets of the sweetest flow'rs:
Green turf should deck our grave, and every year
In spring-time would some friendly hand with care
Bind the fresh briar around, to guard the place
From the rude insult of the careless step,
And faithful Memory to late Time record
We were the happiest pair of human-kind.

THE END.

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